

# **Minority Health Advisory Committee Minutes**

**The Genesis Center**

**9:00 – 11:00 am**

**April 28, 2008**

**Members Present: Maria Barros, Yvette Mendez, Helena Friedmann, Maria Sansiveri, Dannie Ritchie**

**Members Excused Absent: Betty Bernal, Debbie Correia Morales, Donna Huntley-Newby, Aleatha Dickerson, Vinnie Velazquez**

**Members Unexcused Absent: Julie Rawlings, Pich Chhoeun, Janet Anderson**

**HEALTH Staff Present: Carrie Bridges, Ana Novais, Helen Drew, Rilwan Feyisitan**

**Guests/Presenters: Pheamo Witcher, Rita Silva, and Nancy Fritz from The Genesis Center**

## **Call to Order**

**Yvette Mendez called the meeting to order.**

## **Welcome from Host Agency**

**Pheamo Witcher, Executive Director of The Genesis Center, welcomed the MHAC. Ms. Witcher presented an overview of The Genesis Center services. Nancy Fritz and Rita Silva presented a more detailed description of their Minority Health Promotion Center activities and upcoming events.**

## **Review of Minutes**

**Minutes from March 24, 2008 were accepted without changes.**

## **Legislative Updates & Discussion**

**Carrie Bridges distributed a copy of the proposed legislation to establish an Office of Health Equity at the RI Department of Health and shared the status of the identical House and Senate bills. The MHAC discussed the components of the legislation and how it relates to the existing structure and activities at HEALTH. MHAC found some components of the proposed legislation duplicative of existing activities of the Office but agreed on the need to present the issue of racial and ethnic health disparities to legislators and to partner with research institutions to provoke action.**

## **MHAC Membership**

**MHAC brainstormed membership categories and individuals to invite to request appointment to the MHAC. MHAC should solicit representation from: health centers and hospitals (maybe new ED of RIHCA, Jane Hayward), mental health agencies, housing (maybe Judy Jones at the Poverty Center), John Hope Settlement House, higher education (maybe Brown or RWU's social justice institute), senior/elderly community, men's health.**

## **Old Business / Minority Health Advisory Committee Updates**

### **OMH Update**

**OMH planning an Unnatural Causes event on May 7, 2008. The series**

will air on RI-PBS on May 7, 14, 21, & 28. The federal OMH held a grantee meeting on April 8-10, 2008. At that grantee meeting, the “Strategic Framework for Improving Racial/Ethnic Minority Health and Eliminating Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities” was released (See preface distributed at meeting). In addition, more information about the development of the National Partnership for Action was shared (see power point slides distributed at the meeting). The New England Regional Minority Health Committee continues to meet in preparation for the 2009 conference hosted by RI; all MHAC members are invited to participate. Minority Health Month is wrapping up, please visit the Calendar of Events on the OMH website to see a description of events.

### **State Partners Updates**

Maria Sansiveri of DEA informed the MHAC that DEA is no longer processing IDs for elderly or disabled persons. DEA is waiting to see how many people will leave state service by October 1, 2008 and how those departures will impact the delivery of their services.

### **New Business**

Carrie Bridges distributed the hospital conversion application questions to which Lifespan and Care New England will need to respond in their expected merger application. At the next meeting, MHAC will offer any issues/concerns to share with HEALTH in anticipation of that application.

### **Open Comments / Discussion**

**None**

**Next Meeting**

**Meetings are on the 4th Monday of the month from 9:00-11:00 am. The next regularly scheduled meeting is on Monday, May 19th from 9:00 – 11:00 am at the Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy at 421 Elmwood Avenue in Providence.**